

Education Cabinet

Fletcher sends \$500,000 to Western Kentucky for workforce training in energy-related industry

Press Release Date: Tuesday, November 06, 2007

Contact Donna Slone, Office – (502) 564-6606, ext 420, Mobile – (502) 330-7464
Information: Donna.Slone@ky.gov

MADISONVILLE, Ky – On behalf of Governor Ernie Fletcher and Education Secretary Laura E. Owens, Beth Smith, workforce commissioner in the Education Cabinet, presented \$500,000 to the West Kentucky Workforce Investment Board, in partnership with the Green River Workforce Investment Board, today in Madisonville.

The money from the governor's Workforce Investment Act Statewide Reserve Funds will help expand workforce training to meet the increasing needs of the energy and utility industry in coal-to-gas transformation, nuclear power, hydro-generated electric power and the use of ethanol and biodiesel fuels in the Green River, Pennyriple and Purchase area development districts.

"Our goal in the Education Cabinet is to help all citizens realize their full potential to be productive and contributing members of the Commonwealth," said Owens in a prepared statement. "Here in Western Kentucky we're hearing a lot about coal-to-gas transformation, nuclear power, hydro-generated electric power and the use of ethanol and biodiesel fuels. The transformation and use of this energy is the perfect example of how our world is evolving."

Owens said it is critical that we continue to accentuate the importance of life-long learning in an ever-changing world and to provide support to meet the needs of these changes so that every citizen in this region and in this Commonwealth can achieve success in the 21st century.

Gov. Fletcher merged two cabinets to bring workforce development and education together. The Kentucky Education Cabinet works to provide a seamless transition from education to the workforce, Smith told the audience in Madisonville.

"Governor Fletcher knew what he was doing when he brought workforce and education together," Smith said today. "U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor Emily DeRocco, who recently was in Kentucky, said that Kentucky is leading the country in this initiative. Now, at least two other states are following Governor Fletcher's lead."

“The governor knows the money he sends for training a workforce for the energy industry is not just about jobs today; it’s about the future of the region,” Smith said.

(30)